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ABSTRACT

The paper presents a course outline intended for use in a one semester geography of religion course on the college level. Geography of religion is interpreted to include all aspects of the impact of religion on cultural, political, and economic geography. Objectives are to emphasize distributional aspects of religion and religious phenomena, consider the impact of religion upon the cultural landscape in historical and contemporary settings, and analyze belief systems in an objective manner. Information is presented on five major religions--Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism. For each religion, topics include cultural impact; attitudes of adherents toward geographic, political, and economic matters; and the cultural landscape in the region in which the religion is found. Information is also presented on concepts considered fundamental to a general understanding of religion. Concepts include cultural diffusion, acculturation, environmental perception, urban transformation, and ideology. Suggested and required readings for each topic are suggested. Most required readings are from two textbooks: "Geography of Religions," by David E. Sopher, and "The Religions of Man," by Huston Smith. (DB)

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Geography of Religion at Slippery Rock State College

Thomas J. Hannon Jr., Ph.D.

Although most anthropologists and cultural geographers are in agreement with regard to the overwhelming importance of religion as a key to understanding a culture, geographers, in general, have devoted relatively little effort to the geography of religion and related subtopics. That view is evidenced by the paucity of literature relating religion and aspects of culture which express a geographic point of view.[1] Indeed, one of the major texts in cultural geography doesn't even devote a chapter to religion!

Most students of cultural geography ultimately become familiar with its themes as expressed in the introduction to Readings in Cultural Geography by Philip Wagner and Marvin Mikesell. Although it isn't necessary here to review the contents of each theme proposed - they are not mutually exclusive - included are, Culture, Culture Area, Cultural Landscape, Culture History and Cultural Ecology.[2] Numerous cases can be made for the role of religion in each of these as well as in the inherent theme of cultural diffusion.

Geography of Religion at Slippery Rock State College was designed in 1970 to bring to light the vital and often volatile role that religion has played and continues to play in man's perception. The course was offered first in the fall of 1971. At the time there was no known course of such title presented on a regular basis to undergraduate students anywhere in the country.

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[1]There have been outstanding contributions by geographers, (see course outline) however, when compared with other aspects of culture, it appears that religion has been neglected.

[2]Wagner, Philip and Mikesell, Marvin (eds.), Readings in Cultural Geography (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962).

The course began in the "fullness of time" given that there was, in the early to middle 1970's, an inordinate interest in religion - especially in Christianity - an interest that may well have grown out of the upheaval and insanity of the Vietnam era. Enrollment peaked in the spring of 1972 when 81 students registered in two sections. During the summer of that year the course was offered in Salzburg Austria to students of the Pennsylvania Consortium for Higher Education, and undergraduates from several campuses nationwide were enrolled. Since the early 1970's enrollment has declined markedly - a decline that may be attributed in part to a waning interest in courses dealing with religion in the late 1970's. Virtually all courses on our campus in which religion is the focus of inquiry have experienced declining enrollment. Hopefully the trend is a cyclical phenomenon. Nevertheless, more than 400 students have successfully completed the course.

The course was initially designed to proceed in a topical fashion - i.e., through case studies of religion's impact on cultural, political and economic geography. After one semester that scheme was abandoned in deference to that indicated on the course outline where the role of a specific religion in each of these broader topics presents the focus.

Among the more difficult tasks encountered in the organization of such a course was that of establishing a suitable text and reference list. The work of anthropologists, sociologists and other social scientists as well as scholars in the humanities has been invaluable. Among the work of geographers the most noteworthy overall has been Geography of Religions by David Sopher.[3] Unfortunately the work has been out of print for years. Professor Sopher has, however, granted permission to reproduce a sufficient number of copies to last several semesters.

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[3]Sopher, David E., Geography of Religions (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1967).

These are sold to students at cost by the college. In addition to the Bobbs-Merill series reprints, there is included as required material, The Religions of Man by Huston Smith.[4] This work is among the lowest priced texts on comparative religion and has proven quite satisfactory. There are, however, several other paper backs on comparative religion which are equally useful.[5]

Religion is a very personal topic and it is not difficult to offend someone if caution isn't exercised. It is imperative, therefore, that the instructor be completely objective. As geographers, few of us are totally versed in theology, and it is wise to stress at the very beginning that students are enrolled in a geography course and not one in theology or comparative religion. In addition, it has been my experience that the eager minds of many undergraduates demand some philosophising about such matters as what is truth and the salvation of souls to name but two. It is difficult to fit either of these topics (and many others) in a geographic framework, and unless one is able to focus upon matters of environmental perception that these questions may afford some insight into, it is best to limit class discussion on this type of exercise. Of course one cannot deny that these are interesting questions but such pursuits are better relegated to after class wrap sessions if the instructor is comfortable with these and similar queries.

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[4]Smith, Huston, The Religions of Man (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1965)

[5]Hopfe, Lewis M. Religions of the World (Encino: Glencoe Publishing Co. Inc., 1976 2nd ed.)

Champion, Selwyn Gurney and Short, Dorothy (eds.) Readings From World Religions, (Greenwich: Fawcett Publications Inc, 1951)

Lewis, John, The Religions of the World Made Simple (Garden City: Doubleday and Co. Inc., 1968)

Ross, Floyd H., and Hells, Tynette, The Great Religions by Which Men Live, (Greenwich: Fawett Publications Inc., 1956)

The approach used is conceptual to minimize the usually tortuous process of memorization which many students erroneously believe to be learning. Concepts (and many of these are terms rather than ideas) are listed for each topic and provide the framework for both lecture and class dialogue.

Following is a course description including requirements and a tentative outline given each student in the course:

Geography 242

Geography of Religion

Associate Professor T. J. Hannon
Slippery Rock State College

World Culture Building
Office Number 101C

Required text materials: Sopher, David E., Geography of Religions Prentice-Hall, 1967
Smith, Huston, The Religions of Man Harper & Row, 1958

A paper entitled, "The Dutch Reformed in Southwestern Michigan: An Analysis of Cultural Landscape" by T. J. Hannon is available from the department secretary in room 107 of the World Culture Building.

The following reprints from the Bobbs-Merrill Co.:

1. Brush, John E. "The Distribution of Religious Communities in India"
2. Harris, Chauncy D., "Location of Salt Lake City".
3. Isaac, Erich, "On the Domestication of Cattle".
4. Isaac, Erich, "Religious Geography and the Geography of Religion"
5. Isaac, Erich, "The Citron in the Mediterranean: A Study in Religious Influences"
6. Zelinsky, Wilbur, "An Approach to the Religious Geography of the United States: Patterns of Church Membership in 1952"

General Course Description:

Geography of Religion emphasizes distributional aspects of religion and religious phenomena and considers the impact of religion upon the cultural landscape in both the historical and contemporary setting.

Geography of Religion is not a theology course or a course in comparative religions. Theological elements or points of comparison related to environmental perception or to an understanding of the cultural landscape may, however, be considered in an incidental manner. The aim is to be as objective as possible without advocating or condemning any belief system or religion.

Explanation of Course Coutline:

After some introductory material dealing with types of religions and their distribution the course will be directed toward analysis of five major religions considering the impact of each on culture, the attitudes of its adherents toward political and economic matters of geography and the cultural landscape in the region in which each is found. Concepts considered to be important in understanding the role of each religion are listed. They are not mutually exclusive or listed in any particular order of importance or chronology. Further, the list is not exhaustive. Appropriate required and/or suggested readings are listed as well. Some of the readings are listed in more than one place simply because of their importance in several areas of inquiry. Text material is to be considered required reading. You are advised to read selectively the other material listed dependent upon your time and interest. The instructor is not so naive as to require (much less to expect) that all listed material be read.

Tentative Outline

Introduction
- A. Main Objectives
- B. Student Responsibilities
- C. Research themes and options

1. Philosophical Foundations (Topic 1)
   - A. The Geographic Viewpoint
   - B. A general overview of religion's role in three areas of inquiry:
     1. Cultural geography
     2. Political geography
     3. Economic geography
   - C. Fundamental concepts (un ordered)
     1. Geography
     2. Region
     3. Religion
     4. Etiology (Determinism)
     5. Religiofication
     6. Culture
     7. Cultural Landscape
        - (a) positive
        - (b) negative
        - (c) indirect
     8. Environmental Perception
     9. Cultural Diffusion
     10. Acculturation
     11. Ethical Church (invisible)
     12. Ceremonial Church (visible)
     13. Domestication
     14. Sanctifying Economy
     15. Urban transformation
     16. Ideology
   - D. Readings for topic 1 (on reserve)

     Books:
     1. Hoffer, Eric, The True Believer
     2. Wagner, P. and Mikesell, M., Readings in Cultural Geography. See introduction, "The Themes of Cultural Geography" pp. 1-25 and article by Paul Fickeler; "Fundamental Questions in Geography of Religion" pp. 94-118.

     Xerox reproductions:
     1. Bahm, Archie, Philosophy, An Introduction, Chapter 25
     2. Broom and Selznick, Sociology, 5th ed., Chapter 12, "Religion"
     3. Holmes, Lowell D. Anthropology, Chapter 12, "Religion"
     4. Isaac, Erich, "Religion, Landscape and Space"
     5. _____ "Geography of Domestication," Chapter 6
     6. Mumford, Lewis, "The First Urban Transformation"

Text Material:
1. Isaac, Erich, "Religious Geography and the Geography of Religion"
2. _____ "On the Domestication of Cattle"
3. Sopher, David E., Geography of Religions, Chapters 1, 2 and 3. (included under topic 2 as well)

2. Distribution Patterns (Topic 2)
   A. Religious systems and the geographic base
   B. Processes of spatial diffusion
   C. Process of spatial interaction
   D. Fundamental Concepts (unordered)
      1. Ethnic systems
      2. Ethnic field
      3. Animism
      4. Sanctifying economy
      5. Universalizing system
      6. Universal religion
      7. Propagation mechanism
      8. Culture good
      9. Contact conversion
      10. Cultural diffusion
      11. Acculturation
      12. Segmental system
      13. Ecology
   E. Readings for topic 2 (on reserve)

      Books:
      1. Gaustad, Edwin S., Historical Atlas of Religion in America (Reference work included under topic 4 as well)
      2. Hotchkiss, Wesley A., "Areal Patterns of Religious Institutions in Cincinnati, Research Paper #13

      Xerox reproductions:
      1. Broek, J. and Webb, J., A Geography of Mankind, Chapter 6, "Religion, Origins and Dispersals."
      2. Meyer, A. H. and Strietelmeier, J. H., Geography in World Society, Chapter 18, "Geography of Religions"
      3. Fuson, Robert H., "Orientation of Mayan Ceremonial Sites."
      4. Isaac, Erich, "The Act and the Covenant"
      5. White, Lynn T. "The Historical Roots of our Ecologic Crisis" (included under topic 3 as well)

      Text material:
      1. Sopher, David E., Geography of Religions Chapters 1, 2, and 3 (especially "Land Patterns." pp. 30-32.)
      2. _____, Chapters 4 and 5
      3. Zelinsky, Wilbur, "An Approach to the Religious Geography of the U.S."

3. Christianity (topic 3 with emphasis on the U.S.)
   A. Origins and Dispersals - cultural characteristics
   B. Impact of Time and Space
   C. Christian Economic Perception
      1. developed-underdeveloped dichotomy
      2. ecologic implications
   D. Christianity and Political Geography
   E. The Christian Landscape (emphasis W. Pennsylvania)
      1. Comparison with western & central Europe
      2. The Cemetery.

F. Fundamental Concepts (unordered)
1. Judeo-Christian Ethic
2. Propagation mechanism
3. Chiliastic belief
4. Orthodoxy
5. The Reformation
6. Separation of church and state
7. Monotheism
8. Superimposition

G. Readings for topic 3 (on reserve)

Books:
1. Dohrs, Fred and Sommers, Laurence M. (eds.), Cultural Geography Selected Readings. See: Meinig, D.W., "The Mormon Culture Region etc.," pp. 515-557
2. Schneider, Louis (ed.) Religion, Culture and Society. See: Parsons, Talcott, "Christianity and Modern Industrial Society" pp. 273-298, and Pfeffer, Lee, "Religion and State," pp. 600-614.
3. Gaustad, Edwin S. Historical Atlas of Religion in America, (Reference work)
4. Hotchkiss, Wesley A., "Areal Patterns of Religious Institutions in Cincinnati" Research Paper #13.
5. Hostetler, John A., Amish Society
6. _____, Hutterite Society

Xerox reproductions:
1. Allen, James P., "Variations in Catholic-Protestant Proportions in Maine Towns"
2. Bjorklund, Elaine M., "Ideology and Culture Exemplified in Southwestern Michigan"
3. Clark, A. E., "Old World Origins and Religious Adherence in Nova Scotia".
4. Laatsch, William G., "Hutterite Colonization in Alberta"
5. Lazerwitz, R., "A Comparison of Major U.S. Religious Groups"
6. Landing, James E., "The Amish, the Automobile and Social Interaction"
7. _____ "Geographic Models of Old Order Amish Settlements in the U.S."
8. Hopple, Lee C., "Plain Dutch Settlement in Southeastern Pa."
9. Kollmorgan, Walter M., "The Agricultural Stability of Old Order Amish Mennonites in Lancaster County, Pa."
10. Pillsbury, Richard, "The Religious Geography of Pa. - A Factor Analytic Approach"
11. Kardos, Andrew, "Some Aspects of The Religious Geography of Centre County, Pa."
12. Williams, Emilio, "Protestantism as a Factor in Culture Change in Brazil"
13. Jenson, Harold, "Origin, Diffusion and Distribution of Medieval Round Churches in Scandinavia"
14. Lamme, Ary J., "From Boston in One Hundred Years: Christian Science"
15. Francaviglia, Richard V., "Mormon Central-Hall Houses in the American West"
16. _____ "The Mormon Landscape: Definition of an Image of the American West"
17. Lee, J. Oscar, "Religion Among Ethnic and Racial Minorities"
18. White, Lynn T., "The Historical Roots of our Ecologic Crisis"
19. Fisher, Eric, "Religions: Their Distribution and Role in Political Geography" (Chapt. 12) from Weigert, Principles of Political Geography

20. Eisenstadt, S. N., "Religious Organizations and Political Process in Centralized Empires"
21. Population Reference Bureau, Population Profile "Do Roman Catholic Countries have the Highest Birth Rates"?
22. Darden, Joe T., "Factors in the Location of Pittsburgh's Cemeteries"
23. Francaviglia, Richard V., "The Cemetery as an Evolving Cultural Landscape"
24. Jackson, J. B., "From Monument to Place"
25. Jeane, Donald C., "The Traditional Upland South Cemetery"
26. Jordan, Terry G., "The Roses So Red and The Lilies So Fair": Southern Folk Cemeteries in Texas"
27. Hardwick, Claus and Rothwell, "Cemeteries and Urban Land Value"
28. Osborn, Brian S., "Cemeteries of the Midland District of Upper Canada"

Articles from Periodicals or chapters from other sources: (not xeroxed)

1. Dethlefsen, Edwin, and Deetz, James, "Deaths Heads Cherubs and Willow Trees: "Experimental Archaeology in Colonial Cemeteries", American Antiquity, Vol. 31, 1966, pp. 502-10
2. Elkin, C. W., "Remarks on some Old Cemeteries of the Pittsburgh Region", Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine, Vol. 37, 1955
3. Hannon, Thomas J. Jr., "Nineteenth Century Cemeteries in Central-Western Pennsylvania", Proceedings of the Pioneer America Society, Vol. 2, 1973
4. Kniffen, Fred, "Necrogeography in the United States", Geographical Review, Vol. 57, 1967, pp. 426-27.
5. Pattison, W., "The Cemeteries of Chicago: A Phase of Land Utilization", Annals of the Association of American Geographers, Vol. 45, 1955 pp. 245-57.
6. Price, Larry W., "Some Results and Implications of a Cemetery Study", The Professional Geographer, Vol. 18, July, 1966 pp. 201-07
7. Warner, W. Lloyd, "The Living and the Dead", a Study of the Symbolic Life of Americans pp. 280-320.
8. Zelinsky, Wilbur, Unearthly Delights: Cemetery Names as a Key to the Map of the American Afterworld, Proceedings Association of American Geographers, 1973.

Text Material:

1. Smith, Huston, The Religions of Man, "Christianity", Chapter 8
2. Hannon, T. J., "The Dutch Reformed in Southwestern Michigan, etc." (also xeroxed on reserve)
3. Harris, Chauncy D., "Location of Salt Lake City"
4. Zelinsky, Wilbur, "An Approach to the Religious Geography of the United States"

Recommended: (not on reserve)

1. Cross, Whitney R., The Burned Over District
2. Heslinqa, M. W., The Irish Border as a Cultural Divide
3. Nelson, Lowry, The Mormon Village
4. O'Dea, Thomas, The Mormons
5. Slusser, Dorothy and Gerald, Technology the God That Failed
6. Hannon, Thomas J. Jr., The Process of Ethnic Assimilation in Selected Rural Christian Congregations, 1800-1976: A Western Pennsylvania Case Study (Ph.D. Dissertation)

4. Judaism (Topic 4)
   - A. Origins and Dispersals - cultural characteristics
   - B. Impact of Time and Space
   - C. The Jewish Landscape
   - D. Jewish Economic Perception
   - E. Judaism and Political Geography
   - F. Fundamental Concepts (unordered)
     1. Monotheism
     2. Judeo-Christian Ethic
     3. Identity
     4. Cultural Pluralism
     5. Acculturation
     6. Survival Mechanism
     7. Chosen People
     8. Oscillation Principle
     9. Superimposition
     10. Balfour Declaration
     11. Zionism
   - G. Readings for topic 4 (on reserve)

     Books:
     1. Simmons, Frederick J., Eat Not This Flesh, Chapters 3 and 4.

     Xerox reproductions:
     1. Lazerwitz, R., "A Comparison of Major U.S. Religious Groups"
     2. Issac, Erich, The Influence of Religion on the Spread of the Citrus"
     3. Haupert, J. S., "Political Geography of Israeli - Syrian Boundary Dispute, 1949-67."
     4. _____ "Jerusalem: Aspects of Reunification and Integration"
     5. Nijim, Basheer K., "Israel and the Potential for Conflict"
     6. Rowley, Gwyn, "Israel and the Potential for Conflict: A Rejoinder"

     Consider under topic 5 as well.

     Text material:
     1. Smith, Huston, The Religions of Man, "Judaism," Chapter 7
     2. Isaac, Erich, "The Citron in the Mediterranean"

     Recommended: (not on reserve)
     1. Collins, L. and La Pierre, Dominique, O Jerusalem
     2. Sklare, Marshall, The Jews
     3. Uris, Leon, Exodus
     4. Van Den Haag, Ernest, The Jewish Mystique

5. Islam (topic 5)
   - A. Origins and Dispersals - cultural characteristics
   - B. Impact of Time and Space
   - C. The Islamic Landscape
   - D. Islamic Economic Perception
   - E. Islam and Political Geography
     1. Mid East emphasis
     2. Incidental Comment on South and Southeast Asia
   - F. Fundamental Concepts
     1. Hegira
     2. Hajj
     3. Usury
     4. Nomadism
     5. Polygyny
     6. Mosque
     7. Koran
     8. Waqf

G. Readings for topic 5 (on reserve)

Books:

1. Dohrs, F. and Sommers, J. M. (eds.), Cultural Geography, Selected Readings. See: Paul Ward English article pertaining to "Nationalism, Secularism etc.", pp. 272-82
2. Simoons, Frederick J., Eat Not This Flesh, Chapters 3, 4 and 7

Xerox reproductions:

1. See items 3 through 6 under topic 4.

Text material:

1. Smith, Huston, The Religions of Man, "Islam", Chapter 6

Recommended: (not on reserve)

1. de Planhol, Xavier, The World of Islam
2. Hitti, Philip K., Islam and the West
3. Pickthall, Marmaduke (transl.), The Meaning of the Glorious Koran
4. Watt, W. Montgomery, Muhammed, Prophet and Statesman

6. Hinduism (topic 6)
   - A. Origins and Dispersals - cultural characteristics
   - B. Impact of Time and Space
   - C. The Hindu Landscape
   - D. Hindu Economic Perception
   - E. Hinduism and Political Geography
   - F. Fundamental Concepts
     1. Caste (varna)
     2. Transmigration of Souls (Samsara) - reincarnation
     3. Darma
     4. Kharma
     5. Yoga
     6. Nirvana
     7. Scriptural Base
     8. Rishi
     9. Superimposition
     10. Punjab
     11. Sikhs
     12. Exclave
   - G. Readings for topic 6 (on reserve)

Books:

1. Schneider, Louis (ed.), Religion, Culture and Society: See article by Benz, "On Understanding etc." pp. 3-9
2. Simoons, Frederick, Eat Not This Flesh, Chapters 3, 4 and 5

Text material:

1. Smith, Huston, The Religions of Man, Hinduism, Chapter 2
2. Brush, John E., "The Distribution of Religions Communities in India"

Recommended: (not on reserve)

1. Prabhavananda, Swami, (transl.) The Upanishads
2. _____ Bhagavad-Gita - Song of God

7. Buddhism (topic 7)
   - A. Origins and Dispersals - cultural characteristics
   - B. Impact of Time and Space
   - C. The Buddhist Landscape
   - D. Buddhist Economic Perception

E. Buddhism and Political Geography
F. Fundamental Concepts
   1. Four Aryan Truths
   2. Eightfold Path
   3. Universal Charity
   4. Tripitaka
   5. Moral Precepts

G. Readings for topic 7 (on reserve)

Books:
1. Schneider, Louis (ed.), Religion, Culture and Society: See Needham, Joseph, "Buddhism and Chinese Science" pp. 353-358
2. Simoons, Frederick J., Eat Not This Flesh, Chapters 3, 4, 5, 6, and 8

Xerox reproductions:
1. Pfanner-Ingersoll, "Theravada Buddhism and Village Economic Behavior: A Burmese-Thai Comparison"

Text material:
1. Smith, Huston, The Religions of Man, "Buddhism", Chapter 3

Recommended: (not on reserve)
1. Burtt, E. A. (ed.) The Teachings of the Compassionate Buddha
2. Hesse, Hermann, Siddhartha

8. Summary and Conclusions (topic 8)
   A. Contemporary Religion - Geographic considerations
   B. Some Comments on the Peoples Republic of China
   C. Readings:

Text material:
1. Sopher, David E., Geography of Religions, Chapter 6
2. Smith, Huston, The Religions of Man
   Select one
   a. "Confucianism" Chapter 4
   b. "Taoism", Chapter 5

Recommended: (not on reserve)
1. Waley, Arthur, Three Ways of Thought on Ancient China
2. Blakney, R. B. (transl.) The Way of Life - Lao Tzu
3. Ware, James R (transl.) The Sayings of Confucius